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To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.



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August 23, 2011

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Mitchell H. Katz, M.D.
Director

SUBJECT: **NURSING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION REPORT
JULY 1, 2010 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2011**

This report outlines the progress made by the Office of Nursing Affairs (ONA) on key strategies designed to promote recruitment and retention, reduce and eventually eliminate Department of Health Services (DHS) reliance on nurse registry utilization, and standardize DHS system-wide nursing practices, performances and standards for the period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

KEY STRATEGIES

Key strategies include mechanisms and processes to measure and evaluate the efficacy of DHS system-wide nursing activities implemented to maximize operational efficiencies and maintain budgetary control. The key strategies components include:

RECRUITMENT

The overall turnover rate for all the facilities from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 remains low at an overall average of 7.2 percent. (See Attachment I).

The recruitment process continues for Registered Nurses (RNs) and Certified Nursing Attendants (CNAs) with concentration in "Hard-to-Recruit" positions in specialty areas.

- To maximize internal operational efficiencies among nurses an electronic mechanism continues to notify countywide DHS nurses on the Group Wise system of posted ONA website job announcements
- Ongoing Nurse Recruiter Committee meetings to share best practices and review hiring standards
- Participate at Community Career and Health Fairs

RETENTION

Retention programs that enhance recruitment include:

Relocation Incentives Program (RIP) - RIP provides financial assistance in the amount of \$750 to RNs who relocate from at least 200 miles outside of Los Angeles County and sign contracts to work for DHS for a minimum of one year. During this reporting period, there were two (2) new hires that received RIP monetary awards.

Workforce Development (HCWDP) Program – In Fiscal year 2010-11, the Health Care Workforce Development Program (HCWDP) offered educational programs to DHS employees to prepare them with skills identified as critical by the Department. HCWDP worked with approximately 55 DHS employees who are preparing for healthcare careers in professions such as Registered Nurse, MRI Technician, and Community Health Outreach Worker (CHW). HCWDP also provided skill enhancement programs to 310 employees, including environmental services workers learning infection control and green technologies, patient financial services workers, and nurses preparing to be clinical instructors. HCWDP offered approximately 80 DHS employees support with pre-requisite courses and academic preparation programs for healthcare careers.

Funded with outside grants to the non-profit partner, the Worker Education & Resource Center, the HCWDP program is being used as a model for services to other County health-related departments and to support integration and the restructuring of ambulatory and managed care services now underway at DHS. Newly developed programs geared toward these needs include Certified Medical Assistant and Community Health Outreach Worker (CHW). HCWDP prepared and pilot tested a special CHW curriculum integrating physical and behavioral health issues for the Department of Mental Health.

College of Nursing and Allied Health (CONAH) – CONAH continues to recruit students to the RN program to increase retention of graduates at DHS facilities through contractual employment obligations after graduation. Approximately 230 students are expected to enroll in the RN program in August 2011. Ninety-eight percent of the graduates passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) in 2009-2010.

Tutoring and Mentoring Programs (T&MP) - T&MP continues to allow DHS to collaborate with five community nursing schools to offer academic assistance to nursing students to support successful completion of the Registered Nurse (RN) Program. The goal of the program is to increase employment opportunities for the student nurses and graduates at DHS facilities. The T&MP partners with East Los Angeles College (ELAC), Glendale Community College (GCC), Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC), El Camino College-Compton Community Educational Center (ECC-CCEC) and Los Angeles Harbor College (LAHC). An overall total of 1,083 students received DHS T&MP services and 16 RN students were hired.

DHS REDUCTION OF NURSING REGISTRY

There is a projected slight increase in Nursing Registry Expense, from Fiscal Year 2009-10 to the 2010-11 Fiscal Year Estimate (FYE) of \$33,356,215 (See Attachment II).

Collaboration continues with facility Chief Nursing Officers on a monthly basis to reduce nurse registry expenses through the sharing of best practices and review of overall registry expenses by facility.

STANDARDIZED DHS SYSTEM-WIDE NURSING PRACTICES, PERFORMANCE AND STANDARDS

Standardized Nurse Competency evaluation continued during FY 10-11. A total of 7,871 nursing staff completed the competency testing, including the registry personnel.

Of the 7,871 nursing staff tested, 590 did not pass the initial test. After the second test, 30 employees were referred to the Performance Management Unit (PMU) for disciplinary action.

STANDARDIZED DHS SYSTEM-WIDE ALLIED HEALTH PRACTICES, PERFORMANCE AND STANDARDS

Standardized Competency Testing for Allied Health personnel was conducted from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 starting with the following disciplines: laboratory, pharmacy, respiratory, central services technician, renal dialysis technician, audiology, electroencephalograph technician, electro cardiac diagnostic technician, diagnostic ultrasound technician, orthopedic technician, pulmonary physiology technician, blood gas and sleep study technician.

Laboratory:

A total of 743 employees completed the competency testing during this period including: laboratory technicians, laboratory assistants, phlebotomy technicians, tissue analysis technicians, pulmonary technicians, medical data system technicians, clerical staff and registry personnel. Nine employees did not pass the initial test but passed after retesting. No employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Pharmacy:

A total of 639 pharmacy employees, including: pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registry personnel completed competency testing. A total of 72 did not pass the initial test, but 71 passed after retesting. One employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Respiratory:

A total of 258 respiratory employees including: respiratory care practitioners, pulmonary physiology technicians and registry personnel completed competency testing. A total of 8 employees did not pass the initial test but passed after retesting. No employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Central Service Technicians:

A total of 88 central service technicians including registry personnel completed competency testing. A total of 18 employees did not pass the initial test but 17 passed after retesting. One employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Renal Dialysis Technicians:

A total of 18 renal dialysis technicians including registry personnel completed competency testing. A total of 5 employees did not pass the initial test but passed after retesting. No employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Audiology:

A total of 7 audiologists, including registry personnel, completed competency testing. All 7 employees passed the initial test. No employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Electroencephalograph Technicians (EEG):

A total of 11 EEG technicians including registry personnel completed competency testing. One employee did not pass the initial test and failed the second time and was referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Electro Cardiac Diagnostic Technicians (ECHO):

A total of 21 ECHO technicians completed competency testing during this period including registry personnel. Two employees did not pass the initial test but passed after retesting. No employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Diagnostic Ultrasound Technicians, Clerical Staff, Nursing Attendants, Vascular Technicians:

A total of 70 diagnostic technicians, 5 vascular technicians, 1 dark-room attendant, 3 nursing attendants, and 5 clerical staff including registry personnel completed competency testing. Two employees did not pass the initial test but passed after retesting. No employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Orthopedic Technicians:

A total of 19 orthopedic technicians including registry personnel completed competency testing. Ten employees did not pass the initial test and 2 employees failed the retest and were referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

Pulmonary Physiology Technician, Blood Gas, Sleep Study Technician and Clerical:

A total of 55 respiratory care practitioners, 4 blood gas technicians, 5 sleep study technicians, 29 pulmonary physiology technicians and 4 clerical staff including registry personnel completed competency testing. A total of 10 employees did not pass the initial test but passed after retesting. No employee had to be referred to the PMU for disciplinary action.

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NEXT STEPS

The Office of Nursing Affairs will continue to monitor and implement recruitment and retention strategies to reduce registry cost and contribute to the department's financial stability. ONA will continue to develop and implement annual competency assessments and testing for Nursing and Allied Health to ensure compliance with regulations, improve patient safety and enhance quality of care. Additional reports on this subject will be submitted as needed or incorporated into reports related to ambulatory care restructuring.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

MHK:lq
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Attachments

c: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Nursing Officer/Director of Nursing